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Department of State

EXCISE

TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL 218

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ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-08 L-04 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 IO-16 UPW-01
SNM-01 BNDD-05 AID-28 RSR-01 /143 W

R 170216Z JUL 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7432

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11291

SUBJECT: NBC ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THIEU AND KY RE ELECTORAL FUNDS; RECOMMENDATION FOR PRESS POLICY CONCERNING VIETNAM ELECTIONS.

1. ASSOCIATED PRESS STORY OF JULY 15 RECEIVED HERE TODAY SAYS THAT NBC NIGHTLY NEWS OF JULY 15 (YOUR TIME) CARRIED REPORT BY SAIGON NBC CORRESPONDENT PHIL BRADY ALLEGING THAT PRESIDENT THIEU AND VICE PRESIDENT KY ARE USING FUNDS GAINED FROM ILLEGAL DRUG TRAFFIC TO FINANCE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS, AND ALSO ASSERTING THAT "ACCORDING TO EXTREMELY RELIABLE SOURCES GENERAL DZU IS BEING FRAMED BY OTHERS HIGHER UP WHO ARE INVOLVED IN DRUGS".

2. BRADY [redacted] HAS BEEN IN AND OUT VIETNAM FOR ABOUT SIX YEARS AND PROBABLY HAS GOOD LOCAL SOURCES.

3. NEVERTHELESS, WE REGARD BRADY'S REPORT, TEXT OF WHICH WE OBTAINED LOCALLY FROM SAIGON CBS OFFICE, AS EXAMPLE OF IRRESPONSIBLE REPORTING BASED ON DUBIOUS SOURCES, AND NOT WORTH DIGNIFYING BY REBUTTAL. PERIOD BETWEEN NOW AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OCTOBER 3 APPEARS LIKELY TO FEATURE CONTINUING FLOW SPECULATIVE STORIES AND SCANDAL-MONGERING. I DO NOT THINK THAT WE HAVE ANYTHING TO GAIN BY COMMENTING EITHER HERE OR IN WASHINGTON ON SUCH STORIES OR GETTING OURSELVES INVOLVED IN PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS OF CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES INVOLVING POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. MOREOVER, INCREASING VOLUME OF SUCH STORIES AS ELECTION PERIOD HEATS UP WOULD KEEP US SCRAMBLING TO DREDGE UP APPROPRIATELY HARMLESS COMMENTS.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A, CDC, MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Lynberg DATE 1/26/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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4. I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT WE CONTINUE TO REFRAIN (EXCEPT IN EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES) FROM COMMENTS RE VIETNAM'S ELECTIONS AND ELECTIONEERING AS PART OF OUR POLICY OF ENCOURAGING OPTIMUM CONDITIONS FOR PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT NOW AND IN FUTURE.
BUNKER